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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: March 2009

**PLAYHOUSE ON THE GREEN PRESENTS READING OF
"BEBOPMAN",
ORIGINAL MUSICAL BY WILTON'S TONY LAVORGNA
AS PART OF "PAGE TO STAGE" NEW PLAY READING SERIES
SUNDAY, APRIL 26 AT 7PM**

Talk-back with composer/lyricist and audience takes place after performance.

BRIDGEPORT, CT - Playhouse on the Green, Bridgeport's not-for-profit community theater, presents a reading of the new musical *Bebopman* on Sunday, April 26 at 7PM at Playhouse on the Green, as part of the "Page to Stage" New Play Reading Series. *Bebopman* traces the life of Wilton musician Tony LaVorgna. The "Page to Stage" Series is an ongoing Playhouse program that supports Connecticut playwrights and introduces audiences to their latest creations and serves as an important step in the development of new plays.

The musical is based on the composer/lyricist/jazz musician's life story as outlined in his cult graphic novel/comic book, *Bebopman*. LaVorgna wrote the book with Lois Gilbert (special scene by Harvey Pekar), and the lyrics with Alice Schweitzer, Rich Kuslan, and Deb Silver (the song "Authenticity" by Alice Schweitzer). LaVorgna composed the score. The reading features local actors **Kathryn Marchand, Emily Hannon, and Richard Hartley**, and musicians **Rich Kaye** (guitar) and **Tony LaVorgna** (piano, sax, and clarinet). "Page to Stage" Series curator **Mark S. Graham**, who also directs the reading, will moderate an audience talk-back with the playwrights following the performance.

This is a free reading, with a suggested contribution of \$10. Seating is on a first come, first served basis; no reservations necessary. Playhouse on the Green is located at 177 State Street, Bridgeport, Connecticut, 06604. Free parking is nearby. For information, please visit www.playhouseonthegreen.org.

MORE

CONTINUED

Playhouse on the Green's "Page to Stage" New Play Reading Series presents

BEBOPMAN, The Musical

Book by Tony LaVorgna with Lois Gilbert (special scene by Harvey Pekar)

Music by Tony LaVorgna

Lyrics by Tony LaVorgna, Alice Schweitzer, Rich Kuslan and Deb Silver
(The song "Authenticity" by Alice Schweitzer")

Directed by Mark S. Graham

Featuring: Kathryn Marchand, Emily Hannon, Richard Hartley

Rich KayeGuitar

Tony LaVorgna.....Piano, Sax and Clarinet

Sunday, April 26 at 7PM

Admission Free. \$10 suggested donation. No reservations required.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Tony LaVorgna was born in New Haven, CT. His interest in music began at the age of five when his mother started to teach him the piano. When Tony was twelve he heard his father play "Dark Town Strutter's Ball" on an old "C Melody" saxophone. Tony loved it and by age fourteen he was playing jazz saxophone with a local band. He began playing in the pit orchestras and he was especially taken by a production of *The Music Man* that he saw at the Shubert Theater in New Haven. His love for jazz became a life long passion when he heard bebop jazz king Charlie Parker.

Tony's professional career as a musician continued in 1968 when he toured with the Jimmy Dorsey Orchestra. In 1970's Tony moved to Cleveland, Ohio where he established himself as one of the city's top jazz pianists. In the 1980s, Tony moved to Atlanta and became one of the best known jazz saxophonists in the southeastern United States. He formed The Atlanta Allstar Jazz Quartet which quickly garnered honors and awards and toured throughout the country. In 1988 he moved to Chicago and became part of the Chicago jazz scene. Tony toured with the Fats Waller musical, *Ain't Misbehavin*. Combining jazz with theater became an ambition of Tony's. Consequently he wrote and toured with a swing musical called *Sentimental Journey* which featured jazz and music of the swing era. When the show closed Tony decided to study big band writing with former Glen Miller arranger Bill Finegan who was living in the Bridgeport area. With Bill's encouragement, Tony found his own compositions were formidable enough to be recognized nationally.

Tony met director Mark S. Graham while doing a show at Playhouse on the Green and worked with him for over one year creating *Bebopman*. *Bebopman* is based on his graphic novel of the same name and is about his life as a struggling jazz musician. The show's book is written by Tony and comedian/girlfriend Lois Gilbert who is a nationally recognized comicbook writer. His long time songwriting partner Alice Schweitzer helped Tony on the lyrics to the songs. Today Tony lives in Connecticut where he teaches and writes music, and continues to play jazz saxophone throughout the Tri-State area.

Playhouse on the Green is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit theater company bringing "community theater with a twist" to Connecticut audiences at its beautiful 228-seat jewel-box theater in the heart of downtown Bridgeport. Playhouse on the Green's mission is to enrich Bridgeport's cultural life by providing an eclectic variety of live stage entertainment and arts education programs at an affordable cost, as well as providing opportunities for area artists. Among these programs are its mainstage season of plays and musicals; "Playhouse Greenhouse" and "Project Broadway", it's arts education programs for kids and teens; a Sunday evening series of music and comedy; and the "Page to Stage New Play Reading Series", which brings the new work of Connecticut playwrights to the stage. For more info, visit www.playhouseonthegreen.org.

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